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ADDRESS,
THE BRETHREN PUB. HOUSE,
ASHLAND, Ashland Co., OHIO.

ASHLAND, O., DEC 22., 1886.

A Message to Our Patrons.

One more number closes another year in the life of this paper, and we desire to have a few friendly words with our patrons before another year is entered upon.

We want to thank them and our well-wishers and sympathizers for all they have done for us, and to solicit their earnest assistance for the future, as we are yet greatly in need of it.

The paper has a patronage that will barely sustain it under the most economical management, if every thing about it could be made to return money, and all the dues could be collected, without paying a good per cent upon the money invested.

But there are so many demands of a benevolent character upon it. There are poor members who want it for nothing, and some of these are supplied, and when this is done, it costs us about fifty cents in cash, and nothing is received for the labor performed.

Again, we must depend upon agents to circulate the paper. Many people are very little concerned about their spiritual interests, and it requires much persuasion to get some to do their duty. Now and then one of these willing workers takes subscriptions and collects money, and finds it convenient to use it for his private purposes, and becomes involved; and he supposes we will not appeal to law, and then we become the losers.

Others say that "times are hard" and they can not take the paper and pay in advance and ask for time and this is a source of loss because we must borrow money and pay interest to keep the work going on. It may be asked why we give time? To this we answer that to assist on cash in advance strictly, simply means "No paper," or a partial support through pledges or direct donations. As the church has been so burdened, we can not make a plea of this kind.

Another source of loss has been the College burden. It demands a good share of time for which no recompense is returned, and during the past two years the passes on several railroads that were procured through the insertion of time-cards in our advertising columns, from which some money could have been realized, were given to brother Holsinger to help him along in his labors in behalf of Ashland College, a service for which he has received no recompense. We know brethren are sacrificing in other places, but few realize how much is being done by the brethren at Ashland for the cause.

The EVANGELIST is the organ of the church and we can not do without such a medium. And so, much of its contents is of such a character that it will not interest the unconcerned reader, and we cannot hope to increase our business in that direction.

These things taken together make a burden that is heavy and pare down the income so that we must solicit all who have the cause at heart and all others who will, to render such assistance as they can render. Indeed the brethren should all feel it a duty to help this work along and persuade as many others to do the same, and be prompt in paying what is due the paper.

A united effort in this direction would soon supply all that is lacking, and even enable the publishers to give their patrons an improved paper. Brethren shall it be so?

Now some will find fault with the paper, and instead of encouraging it, the burden of their language is some undesirable feature and the influence is altogether against its interest. Probably some of the exceptions are well taken. The church has not told us what kind of a master we have to serve in this work. If this was definitely fixed, then we would know whether we were in the right place or not, and whether we could accept the servitude. One wants to make a speciality of arranging another church; but we can not serve this master: if he is the one, then we are out of our place, and in some other man's. We mean to be popular with one master; namely, Jesus Christ, and he says, "Overcome evil with good."

Another one wants the paper to be a medium for the discussion of all themes relating to Christianity. We have tried this master and he has proven an unreasonable and damnable one. The discussions convince very few to a contrary opinion and drive toward doubts and infidelity the youthful and innocent reader. It increases the patronage of the paper, but it troubles the conscience. We cannot serve that master. If he is to be the one, then we are in another man's place.

The great Master, Christ, commands his followers to overcome evil with good; to make our good so influential that all who come in contact with us will be impressed with our deportment and persuaded to do likewise. This is an excellent master to serve. This is the master who should be served in managing a paper intended for the church and family.

Discussions of theological subjects and harsh denunciations of evil in such a paper lead to sensationalism and feudalism, and often defeat the aim sought, and instead of leading to purer and greener pastures, lead through rocky and perilous ways. There is no other way so effectual as overcoming evil with good.

Now brethren, a new year is before us. Can we have your prayers and hearty support in publishing a paper for the church during the coming year? Will you do what you can well do to give us an increased family of readers for 1887? We mean to try to publish a paper that shall be a creditable one and breathe an influence that will encourage spiritual development. If you are too combative to find any delight in such a periodical and too sensational to take enough interest in it to give it your hearty support, then we are not the right man in the right place, and steps should be taken to define the master that is to be served.

Now brethren we await your hearty responses in the way of increased subscription lists for 1887. Some have already sent in this kind of a testimony; we thank them.

Christmas.

Next Saturday another Christmas will be celebrated. It is looked upon as a time for being happy and making others happy. The custom no doubt, has its origin in the fact that centuries, ago, God gave his own dear Son to suffer and die for sinners. That occasion was a time of rejoicing; the shepherds and the angels rejoiced. It was a theme the prophets delighted to dwell upon, and all the heavenly hosts were made glad that men were so blessed. They were made glad because an inestimable blessing was conferred upon men, such a one as he could not confer upon himself, and one that many will enjoy when Christmas days shall be no longer.

In this remembrance of the great Gift, let not the duty to the unhappy be forgotten. There are many yet who have not Christ with them. They should accept him that they may realize the happiness that is eternal. Then there are the poor upon whom gifts can be bestowed, and God will remember the deed and bless the giver.

Our Christmas is the real birthday anniversary of Christ. The year is uncertain. Chronologists differ as much as six years in deciding on the time of Christ's birth. But the day has been kept through the ages, and the day of his birth was kept in the records of birth at Rome, and they were examined by an early Christian bishop, to see whether the practice of celebrating Christmas had chosen the correct day. The records harmonized with the traditional Christmas, and both are good witnesses.

The world may choose its own way in observing this festive day, but the Christian, if he enters into any demonstration, should do it in honor of Christ. May the great gift never be forgotten, and when the mind is called to its contemplation, let not the duty that is due to God be overlooked.

Creeds and Divisions.

The most fruitful source of division in the Christian church is the creed. If men had not adopted the extremity of making creeds for the purpose of combatting error, there would not be half so many divisions in the church.

Usually new societies are formed in this way. Two able men differ upon a question of theology. Each one esteems himself very highly. He has sent out his opinions upon a subject of theology. A man equally as great takes an opposite view. They come in contact and then there is a clash. One is so much concerned about his opinion that he feels that it is most important that it becomes the doctrine of the church, and that there is great danger of the church going to ruin if the contrary doctrine is believed. He calls a council, and a creed must be made clothing his opinion with authority, and it is made binding upon the conscience of the brethren. By usage it becomes a fixture in the hearts of a class of people, and a permanent wall of partition. If that personal difference had been allowed to remain as a mere opinion of the man who was successful, after he and his opponent had passed away, then the followers of each would discover that the difference was not so great as supposed to be under the feeling of sympathy for their leader, and the influence of his vehement denunciations of the contrary opinion, and would join hands and would work together as brethren. But where such an interpretation is raised to the dignity of a creed, then there is a barrier which is hard to put out of the way. Men are slow to put away that which they and their fathers held as binding upon the conscience. Consequently a division has been created that can not be easily removed.

Half-sheet Next Week.

Next week we will issue a half sheet. In this we can give the news, and as we are giving fifty-two numbers per year instead of fifty as some of our exchanges do, we feel that our patrons will gladly give us this partial rest.

Now is the time to renew your subscription.

EDITORIAL ITEMS.

A card from Bro. Bashor dated Dec. 18, says: Last night I closed a six nights meeting at Indiana Creek. It rained, snowed or blowed nearly the whole time. Our congregations were large for the roads and the weather but small for a revival meeting. No accessions but a general interest aroused and a fine prospect for a large ingathering with fair weather, a good preacher and 3 weeks hard work. Tomorrow I open up at South Bend in the Dedication of the new church. Then I go home.

On a card from Goshen, Ind., Bro. Bashor says: "Closed work in Nappanee, Ind., Dec. 10th with 16 confessions. Three came out the last night. I am this week at Pine Creek, but the rain and mud are hindering our meetings."

Bro. W. C. Perry made a good point in his "talk" at the young peoples' meeting at the College last Lord's day regarding soul-action. He said that one act prepared the soul for greater action in the same direction. It follows then that the person who does an evil act prepares himself and creates a desire to do the same act or similar acts again; and in doing good acts a desire is created to repeat them. He further said that in commencing to do good the first acts were painful, or more or less pain was felt, while in doing evil, pleasure was felt in the act and the suffering came afterward, while joy followed the good.

Experience testifies to the truth of these principles. It is very painful to to commence the work of grace, and confess Christ as the Savior; but a little pressing on will open unknown sources of pleasure and satisfaction.

Letters like this appeal to our benevolence, and we do not feel hard, and cheerfully send the paper on, trusting to the Lord for what the sister cannot pay.

MOUNT SHASTA, CAL., Dec. 1st.—Dear Brethren in Christ: As I am a widow I have a hard way to get any money and so that is why I did not send you the little mite for my paper before; hope you will not feel hard with me for not sending it before, and one dollar is all I can get to send you now. But I trust you will still send me the paper, as I do love to have it to read and can learn what is going on in the Brethren church back in the states, as I am the only one here in this Valley. I am still trying to live faithful and hope to meet you and all my brethren in Heaven and I ask an interest in your prayers, as I feel lonely in this Valley without a church or sisters or brothers to talk to. But my Savior is with me I know, I say adieu to you, and ever remain your true sister till death shall separate us here in this life.

A. C.

Some of the brethren are doing well in securing subscriptions for the coming year. They are sending in all the old names and with them new ones. Can every church increase its number of copies this year?

Send for the Annual; single copy 10 cents, 12 copies $1.00.

If you have not read the prospectus of *The Investigator*, already, turn to the inside of this number and read it. It will be in charge of Bro. Mason and will take the place of the *Home Pulpit*.

The College Literary Society give an open entertainment this Wednesday evening. The students are taking a live interest in this work, and are acquiring the "speaking habit" rapidly.

Bro. Rittgers is heard from occasionally. He is still at work for the Master, and doing well.

Now is the time to renew your subscription for 1887.

Bro. Bashor's work in Indiana, thus far, has been a very successful one, and we pray that there may be a large ingathering at South Bend.

The Annual will be ready in a few days. Send in your orders now. It will contain forty pages this year and will be mailed to any address for 10 cents.

A subscription list for *The Investigator* has been started. The first number will appear early in January and afterwards on the first of each month.

Bro. J. H. Worst, of Williamsport, Dakota, expects to visit Kansas in January, and do some preaching.

Bro. John Kurtz, of Williamsport, Dakota, writes that they have some prospects of organizing a church next spring.

We trust our agents will improve the holidays in canvassing for the EVANGELIST. There is no more favorable time in the year for this work.

Bro. H. E. Faidley, of Burr Oak, Kansas, writes this: "I see an article in No. 48, by J. B. Wampler concerning our creed, in reference to the laying on of hands at baptism, which I often thought could be dispensed with in winter time until a change of clothes is obtained and seated around the fire in a warm room. I suppose this will be a matter that will be left to the congregations." A number of the ministers of the Brethren Church usually perform the ceremony in the church or other convenient places. Our mind is that it is a matter that should be left with the choice of the minister.

Bro. A. A. Cober, of Glenford, Ohio, called yesterday morning as we went to press. We will tell our readers the purpose of his visit next week.

The paper contains correspondence from a good many different fields this week, but they are all short and do not fill the usual part of the paper.

Bro. Edward Mason called again, Monday, while on his way to Wayne county, a few miles east of Ashland, where he expects to make his home. He expects to dispose of his property in Farmersville, Ohio.

Bro. P. J. Brown, it is said, will spend a part of the coming year attending to the Lord's work in the Miami Valley.

This year there will be no vacation at the College through the holidays.

Keep your sorrows and trials from the little ones as far as possible. Life should be all sunshine for them; they will find out its shadows soon enough.

Opportunity has hair in front, behind she is bald, if you seize her by the forelock you may hold her, but, if suffered to escape, not Jupiter himself can catch her again.

The first pressure of sorrow crushes out from our hearts the best wine; afterward the constant weight of it brings forth bitterness—the taste and stain from the lees of the vat.